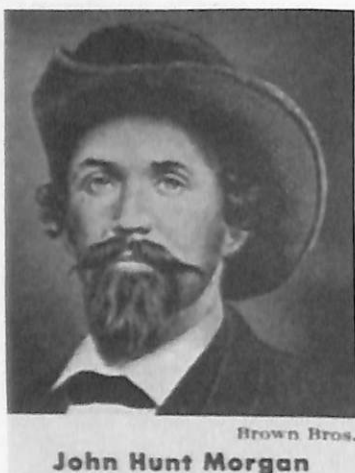




Morgan's Raiders initiated the only military action of the Civil War to directly involve Stonelick Township.

Confederate States of America, was dispatched by General Bragg into Kentucky to sever communications between the Union forces of General Rosecrans and General Burnside. Morgan decided to enter Union territory, harass Camp Dennison, create as much confusion as possible, and draw after him Union forces which might otherwise reinforce Rosecrans and Burnside.

Though "Morgan's Raiders" numbered only 2,000, and Union forces in and near Camp Dennison totalled about 50,000, his daring raid succeeded in causing a very great deal of chaos. He had crossed the Ohio River near Rising Sun, Indiana. He moved so quickly through the outskirts of Cincinnati that he was virtually undetected. Arriving at Camp Dennison on the morning of the 14th as a complete surprise, the raiders wrecked a Little Miami Railroad train, burned some wagons and, after a brief skirmish, escaped eastward into Clermont County.

Taking generally the route of U.S. 50, the rebel force moved quickly through Miami and Stonelick Townships. As fast as they moved, news moved faster. Knowing that Morgan's men routinely took fresh horses wherever they could be found, residents took action of their own. Near the present intersection of Sugar Camp Road and U.S. 50, one man quickly led his horses into a small depression on a hilltop slightly north of the present location of Red Fox Stables, just as Morgan's men came into sight! As Morgan's troops reached Stonelick Creek, a small party diverted northward along the creek. Upon reaching St. Philomena Church, and observing the well-worn road leading toward the settlement known as Cravertown, they continued in search of fresh horses. But once again, news outpaced them.

J. P. Craver, who occupied the house at the corner of (present) Benton Road and Stonelick-Williams Corner Road, now the residence of the Stephen Craver family, along with his neighbors, the Rev. Hezekiah Hill and Mr. Ryan, had likewise spirited their horses to a hiding place in the heavily wooded hills northeast of (present) Rapp Lane. Hill was forced to leave two of his horses in his barn, at the present residence of Albert and Raymond Seibert, and these were taken by Morgan's men. They left two winded mounts in exchange, and Rev. Hill plowed and planted in future years behind once proud steeds of the Confederate Cavalry!

The Ryan house is presently the home of the Eugene Burwinkel family.

There are unsubstantiated reports of an Owensville man having been shot by one of Morgan's troops for refusing to surrender his horse. But, in general, the citizenry appeared to have been unharmed in the raid.

Union troops pursued Morgan, some by rail over the present route of the Norfolk and Western Railway through Batavia, others on foot and horseback. The march ended along the East Fork near

Batavia, where the force began cutting trees across the road to hinder Morgan should he return by that route.

Morgan was captured on July 26, 1863 at Salineville, Ohio and was imprisoned in the Ohio Penitentiary. Incredibly, he and six of his men literally carved their way out of the prison with table knives, boldly boarded a passenger train to Cincinnati, and were spirited into Kentucky by Confederate agents.

So ended the only hostile action of the Civil War in Stonelick Township. Clermont County resumed its peaceful routine, seemingly unaware that a native son would soon thrust it into national attention by two victories: the first bringing him to the Court House of Appomattox, the second to the White House in Washington. For it was Ulysses Simpson Grant of Point Pleasant, Ohio, who had done the real work of saving the Union.

The little church at Stonelick had by this time been weatherboarded. It had survived several hard winters, and had been flooded, on more than one occasion, by the rampaging spring run-off of Stonelick Creek. The willing congregation had always quickly repaired the damage, and the parish continued its growth.

But in the spring of 1868, disaster struck. The church burned to the ground on the eve of Ascension Thursday. Once again the faithful were forced to meet in private homes while the Board of Trustees, under the leadership of Father Navarron, put into motion plans for a new church.

Once again, parishioners provided a great deal of the material and labor required. Nevertheless, cost totalled \$2,500.00. The new church was constructed of masonry, measured 50 feet by 33 feet, and was artfully appointed. Over the altar, a painting of St. Philomena looked out over the worshipping faithful. There were 33 pews and a choir gallery in which an organ was installed.

The completed structure was consecrated by Archbishop Purcell in 1869.

In a letter to Archbishop Purcell, dated August 9, 1868, Father Navarron described the situation at St. Philomena. "...their spiritual want, their wishes, their will to build a new church now that they commence to increase so much in number with the hope to form, very soon, a great congregation."

"They are at least 56 families, having (uncertain) no other place, I mean no better place of meeting together to hear Mass and perform their religious duties on Sundays than Stonelick where I live. Consider their actual number, there is sure hope that their number will increase because it is decided now that a mail road from Milford to the bridge on Stonelick (3/4 of a mile from my house) then to Batavia, will be built next fall and spring."